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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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6 drown in Kunigal as dam gate opens suddenly

TUMAKURU, 7 OCT

At least six people drowned after the sluice gate of the Markonahalli dam in Kunigal in Tumakuru suddenly opened, sweeping them away on Tuesday afternoon, police said. According to Tumakuru Superintendent of Police Ashok KV, 15 people had travelled from BG Palya to Madipalya and decided to visit the dam, as Tuesday was a public holiday. The victims, residents of BG Palya in Tumakuru town, were part of a group that had gone to the dam for a picnic when the incident occurred. "Seven people had entered the downstream of the dam as the water level was low. Suddenly, the water flow increased, and they were swept away," Ashok told reporters. Two bodies have been recovered at the time of publishing, while four others remain missing, police said. The officer said that the dam has a natural gravity sluice gate, which opens automatically as the water level rises. "We will get to know about the sequence of events after the investigation. We have to get details from the engineer on whether someone opened the gate." *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Modi, Starmer to review India-UK ties on Wednesday

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet his UK counterpart, Keir Starmer, in Mumbai during Starmer's two-day visit beginning Wednesday, marking the British leader's first trip to India. The two leaders are expected to review the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, focusing on trade and investment, including the proposed Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). On Thursday, they will engage with business and industry leaders and deliver keynote addresses at the sixth Global Fintech Fest at the Jio World Centre, one of the world's largest fintech gatherings. During his visit, Modi will also inaugurate major infrastructure projects, including the Navi Mumbai International Airport and the final phase of Mumbai Metro Line-3, and launch India's first integrated public transport app, "Mumbai One," to enhance connectivity across the city. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

Deve Gowda admitted to hospital for fever

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Former prime minister HD Deve Gowda has been admitted to a private hospital in the City due to fever, according to sources close to the 92-year-old Janata Dal (Secular) leader. The sources stated, "Most likely, he will be discharged tomorrow." The hospitalisation comes as a concern for his supporters and political peers, emphasizing the continuing impact of health issues at his advanced age. *—PTI*

CM extends caste survey by 10 days

Govt schools to have holidays until 18 Oct

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the government was extending the caste survey until 18 October. The survey was supposed to conclude on Tuesday.

He announced that government and government aided schools in the State would be granted holidays from 8 October to 18 October so that the teachers involved in the work can complete the ongoing Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as the called 'caste survey'.

"We were supposed to end (the survey work) on 7 October. But in some districts, the survey is almost completed, while in some districts it was lagging," the Chief Minister told reporters after a meeting with the ministers and officials.

"For example, in the Koppal district, 97 per cent of the survey has been completed. The survey was 63 and 60 per cent in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts, respectively. In the entire State, the survey has not been completed as we expected," he said.

Siddaramaiah said the survey will take only eight working days till 18 October.

Teachers involved in mid-term examinations will be exempted from the survey.

He further explained that an order was issued yesterday by the Education Department in consultation with the Backward Classes Commission. After further discussions on Tuesday, the government decided to engage all teachers in survey work.

"Each teacher was asked to cover at least 15 households per day, but that target hasn't been met. Teachers' associations requested an extension of holidays, so we have extended the Dasara holidays by 10 more days. The survey must be completed within this time period," he said.

Siddaramaiah also announced a compensation of Rs 20 lakh to three staff members who died during the survey work.

—Salar News with agencies

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VALMIKI JAYANTHI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Minister KH Muniyappa, MLA Rizwan Arshad and others garland the statue of Maharishi Valmiki on Tuesday at the Vidhana Soudha premises in the City ***PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD***

SC to hear plea against BJP's video targeting Muslims

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear a plea seeking directions to social media platform X and BJP Assam Pradesh to remove a video allegedly 'targeting, vilifying, and demonising Muslims.'

A bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta issued notice and posted the matter for hearing on 28 October.

The application, filed through advocate Lzafeer Ahmad, stated that on 15 September, 2025, BJP Assam circulated a video claiming a 'Muslim takeover of Assam' if the party lost power. The video allegedly shows Muslim individuals wearing skullcaps and burqas taking over tea estates, Guwahati airport, and Guwahati town.

"It is submitted that as the ruling dispensation, BJP Assam is bound by the Constitution and secular values. Yet, this video openly targets and demonises Muslims," the plea said. It added that the state, as guardian of all communities, is constitutionally prohibited from discrimination based on religion, caste, or language.

The video, shared on BJP Assam's official X handle, had 4.6 million views, 19,000 likes, and 6,100 reposts by 18 September. The plea urged X India Pvt Ltd and BJP Assam Pradesh to immediately take down the video to prevent communal disharmony. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

SC seeks details of 3L deleted voters in Bihar from EC

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Election Commission to provide details of 3.66 lakh voters excluded from the final electoral roll prepared after Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

The bench, which was hearing a batch of pleas challenging the 24 June decision of the Election Commission to conduct the SIR in poll-bound Bihar, said the EC will submit whatever information it gets on excluded voters by Thursday, when it will hold the next hearing on these pleas. The top court said everyone has the draft electoral roll and the final list has also been published on 30 Sept, so the required data can be furnished through a comparative analysis.

The poll panel informed the apex court that most of the names added in the final list after the publication of the draft list on 30 August were of new voters and that no complaint or appeal has been filed till now by any excluded voter.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi passed the directions after some petitioners, including political leaders from Opposition parties like RJD, Congress and CPI (M), said that the Election Commission (EC) has not given any notice or reasons to the deleted voters for their exclusion from the final electoral list. *—PTI*

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God made me throw shoe at CJI: Lawyer

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

> **I am not going to apologise. God made me do this, if he wishes I go to jail, or I am hanged, it is his wish**
>
> — Rakesh Kishore, Lawyer

Lawyer Rakesh Kishore, who attempted to hurl a shoe at Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai on Monday, said that he does not regret his action.

"I am not fearful and I have no regrets... I have not done anything, God made me do it," Kishore said. "I am not going to apologise. God made me do this, if he wishes I go to jail, or I am hanged, it is his wish."

Kishore said that he was hurt by the CJI's remarks while dismissing a plea seeking restoration of the structure of Lord Vishnu in the Javari temple in Khajuraho. "Gavai made fun of it by saying 'Go pray to the idol to restore its head'.... When there are matters related to the Sanatan dharma, be it Jallikatu or the height of the Dahi Handi, Supreme Court's orders have hurt me."

He claimed the Supreme Court was passing orders targeting a specific community.

Meanwhile, Gavai expressed concern over the misinterpretation of judges' oral observations on social media.

Referring to the growing trend of online distortion, CJI Gavai recounted how he had asked Justice K Vinod Chandran not to voice certain observations during the hearing of the Dheeraj Mor case. "Otherwise, on social media, we don't know what will be reported. I requested my learned brother to restrict it only to my ears," he said, speaking light-heartedly during a hearing. *—PTI*

India seeks more information on Boeing 787

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India's air safety regulator has sought more information from Boeing Co. after an Air India 787 Dreamliner's emergency power system unexpectedly activated on Saturday, a government source said.

The aircraft, flying from Amritsar to Birmingham, UK, deployed its Ram Air Turbine during final approach at 500 feet, according to the Federation of Indian Pilots. The plane landed safely.

Separately, addressing the 12 June Air India 787 crash that killed 260 people, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said there should be "no manipulation or dirty business" in the ongoing AAIB probe. *—Agencies*

18 killed as landslide hits bus in Himachal Pradesh

SHIMLA, 7 OCT

At least 18 passengers were killed as a private bus they were travelling in was struck by a massive landslide in Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district on Tuesday evening, officials said.

The accident took place in Bhalughat area in Jhandutta assembly segment around 6:30pm, they said, adding the bus carrying 30-35 passengers was on its way from Marotan to Ghumarwin.

Intermittent rains have been lashing the area since Monday.

So far 18 bodies have been recovered from the debris and three people rescued and sent to hospital, BJP MLA from Jhandutta JR Katwal said.

Police and district administration officials are at the spot and rescue operations are going on in full swing.

Whole mountain came crashing down on the bus, said an eyewitness engaged in the rescue operations.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Deputy CM Mukesh Agnihotri have expressed grief over the accident.

PM Narendra Modi expressed grief and announced an ex-gratia relief of Rs 1 lakh from the to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 to those injured. *—PTI*

Intermittent rains have been lashing Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur since Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Rs 1L EX-GRATIA will be given to next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 to those injured from the PM National Relief Fund, announced Prime Minister Narendra Modi

ENVIRONMENT RULES VIOLATED

K'taka Pollution Control Board closes 'Bigg Boss' studio in Bidadi

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

The Bengaluru South district authorities on Tuesday sealed the studio premises hosting the Kannada reality show 'Bigg Boss' in Bidadi following the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) order.

The board had cited serious violations of environmental regulations.

District authorities along with a posse of police and KSPCB officials reached the spot and locked the premises.

The board had issued a notice on Monday to Vels Studios and Entertainment Private Limited (Jolly Wood Studios & Adventures), directing that all activities at the site be stopped with immediate effect.

Sandalwood actor and 'Big Boss' host Kicha Sudeep ***PHOTO: X***

In the official communication, the Board stated, "The said premises are being used for large-scale entertainment and studio operations without obtaining the required consent for establishment and consent for operation under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981."

The notice added, "In view of the violations observed, you are hereby directed to close down the operations with immediate effect and to furnish an explanation to this office within the stipulated period."

The Bigg Boss Kannada edition, hosted by actor Kichcha Sudeep, has been filmed in a custom-built set at Bidadi for several years.

The show, among the State's most-watched television programmes, is known for its elaborate production scale. *—PTI*

Nobel in Physics goes to three scientists for quantum technology

STOCKHOLM, 7 OCT

John Clarke, Michel H Devoret and John M Martinis won the Nobel Prize in Physics on Tuesday for research on seemingly obscure quantum tunnelling that is advancing digital technology.

Clarke, 83, conducted his research at the University of California, Berkeley; Martinis at the University of California, Santa Barbara; and Devoret at Yale and also at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

"To put it mildly, it was the surprise of my life," Clarke told press.

"Our discovery in some ways is the basis of quantum computing."

Clarke added: "One of the underlying reasons that cellphones work is because of all this work."

Illustrations: Niklas Elmehed

The Nobel committee said that the laureates' work in the 1980s continues to provide opportunities to develop "the next generation of quantum technology, including quantum cryptography, quantum computers, and quantum sensors."

Olle Eriksson, Chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics, praised how quantum mechanics continues to offer "enormously useful" surprises, underpinning all digital technology.

This is the 119th Nobel in Physics and prizes continue until 13 Oct. *—PTI*

Must hike ST quota to add Kurubas: CM

Says it was BJP who wanted Kurubas in ST list

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the reservation percentage for Scheduled Tribes (ST) should be increased to include the Kuruba community as an ST.

Speaking at a Valmiki Jayanthi on Tuesday in Vidhana Soudha, Siddaramaiah added that the government under former BJP chief minister Basavaraj Bommai had recommended including the Kuruba as an ST community.

"I was not the person who fought for providing ST tag to Kurubas. It was former minister KS Eshwarappa who recommended it during the Bommai government," Siddaramaiah said. "When JH Patel was CM, he recommended to the central government to include several communities, including the Bestha, in the ST category."

However, he noted that the NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not included Kurubas in the ST list. "Even now there is no confidence that they will do it. But if they do it, let it be as per the population. It should be increased to 14 per cent or 20 per cent."

He noted that in states such as Mizoram and Odisha, the reservation percentage was linked to the population.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah — PHOTO: X @SIDDARAMAIAH

"I fully support and agree that if the Kuruba community is included in the ST category, the ST reservation quota should be increased," he said.

"No one should put their hand into another's food plate, and no one should snatch away another's opportunities. That is my commitment."

Siddaramaiah noted that he and former MP VS Ugrappa had pushed for including Valmikis as an ST community, which happened because of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda's persuasion.

CABINET RESTUCTURING

In a statement Siddaramaiah said that when the Cabinet is restructured in the "coming days.... consideration will be given to providing representation".

Noting that a lawyer had hurled his show at Chief Justice BR Gavai in the Supreme Court, Siddaramaiah said, "(Gavai) has personally forgiven the act of throwing a shoe at him. This reflects his great virtue. However, I strongly condemn such an act. There is a hand of Manuvaadis in this." —*Salar News*

Bengaluru not cooperating in caste survey: DKS

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the people were cooperating with the caste enumeration in rural areas, but there were delays in the City, as the government announced a ten-day extension for the caste survey. He urged City residents to cooperate with enumerators for the Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as the "caste census" and provide accurate information.

After attending a meeting on the issue at Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday, he said in a statement, "In the rural areas of the State, 90 per cent of the people are cooperating with the survey, and the enumerators are performing excellently... Regarding Bengaluru City, the survey has started slowly due to some tasks of the Election Commission."

"Therefore, I request the residents of Bengaluru to cooperate." —*Salar News*

If DKS can't face 60 questions, how can citizens: Vijayendra

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

BJP President BY Vijayendra criticised the ongoing Social and Educational Survey—widely referred to as the "caste census"— terming it "totally unscientific" and accusing the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government of "attempting to divide" the Hindu religion.

The survey, conducted by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, began on 22 September.

"Along with several technical glitches, because of the pressure exerted by the State government, they (the Commission) have not been able to carry forward the caste census properly. There are more than 60 questions in the caste census. (Deputy CM) DK Shivakumar himself was unable to answer many questions, then how will the common man answer?" Vijayendra told reporters in City on Tuesday.

He termed the survey as "totally unscientific" and alleged that when there is little development in the State, the Siddaramaiah government is seeking to divert attention.

"Priority is not given to farmers, who are in distress due to floods and rains. Siddaramaiah.... is unable to understand the real crisis in the State and to divert the issue, has floated this caste census," he said.

"They are not only creating confusion—this Siddaramaiah-led Congress government is trying to divide the Hindu religion, and that is the most unfortunate part," Vijayendra added.

BY Vijayendra pays floral tributes to Valmiki at the party's state office in Bengaluru's Jagannath Bhavan — PHOTO: X @BYVIJAYENDRA

- Responding to CM Siddaramaiah labelling the BJP as "anti-backward classes", Vijayendra asserted that the BJP has "more commitment than Congress to provide social, educational and economic justice to all sections of society."

He alleged that the backward classes commission is conducting the survey in haste, under "pressure and without adequate preparation."

"Teachers appointed as enumerators are facing multiple issues. Even disabled persons have been appointed as enumerators, which has drawn criticism," he said.

Responding to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah labelling the BJP as "anti-backward classes", Vijayendra asserted that the BJP has "more commitment than Congress to provide social, educational and economic justice to all sections of society." "That is why the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has decided to conduct caste enumeration during the upcoming national census. We are not opposed to caste census," he said. —*PTI*

Community must decide: HM on Lingayat religion

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Home Minister **G Parameshwara** said that it must be clarified whether the Veerashaiva-Lingayat religion and the Lingayat religion are the same or different religions. He stressed that this decision must be made by the community itself.

"First, it must be clarified whether the Veerashaiva-Lingayat religion and the Lingayat religion are the same or different. This decision should be made by the community itself. Lingayats and Veerashaivas keep saying every day that they are different from each other. If this confusion is resolved first, everything else will fall into place," Parameshwara said.

He defended Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's remarks at the closing ceremony of the Basava cultural campaign. CM had said, "Caste system is rooted in our society. To uproot this caste system, Basavanna launched a separate religion (Lingayat)."

"The CM did not speak about any religious matters at the Basava event. He did not talk about religion or religious issues," he claimed. —*ANI*

MAHARISHI VALMIKI JAYANTHI

Folk artistes perform a dance performance during the Maharishi Valmiki Jayanthi celebrations held at the Vidhana Soudha premises in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Valmiki Jayanthi commomerates the birth of Valmiki, who is the sage and author of the epic poem, the Ramayana — PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Woman pours hot oil on husband, suspects infidelity

BELAGAVI, 7 OCT

In a shocking incident at Machche village of Belagavi in the State, a woman is alleged to have poured boiling oil over her husband, suspecting him of infidelity. Fifty-five-year-old Subhash, who works in LPG cylinder distribution, returned home for lunch on Monday afternoon when a heated argument escalated with his wife, Vaishali. In a fit of rage, Vaishali reportedly threw hot cooking oil onto Subhash's head. He suffered severe burns to his head, eyes, and other body areas, leading him to jump into a water tank in desperation. Subhash was rushed to BIMS Hospital in Belagavi for treatment. The Belagavi Rural Police have registered a case and are currently investigating the incident. —*SALAR NEWS*

Security guard dies by suicide in the City

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

A 32-year-old security guard, Lakhan Vishwakarma, died by suicide at the residential quarters of Dr Ambedkar Medical College and Hospital in the City. Vishwakarma, a resident of Bihar, had been employed at the facility for just over a month. On Sunday night, he reportedly shot himself in the throat with a double-barrelled gun he had acquired through a private agency. His body, discovered on Monday with two gunshot wounds, was found in a pool of blood. The police said that no suicide note was found and it appears he may have had a strained relation with his family. —*PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

Director held for sexually harassing TV actress

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Kannada filmmaker Hemant Kumar has been arrested for allegedly blackmailing and sexually harassing a television actress he promised a lead role to in his film. The 33-year-old was apprehended on 5 October and has since been remanded to judicial custody.

In her complaint, the actress, known for her work in various television series, detailed that in 2022 Kumar, who presented himself as a producer and associate director, offered her a lead role. Following an agreement for remuneration of Rs 2,00,000, Kumar delayed filming while allegedly harassing her to wear "indecent" clothing and behaving inappropriately during the shoots.

The situation escalated at a press conference in Mumbai on 5 August, 2023, where Kumar reportedly forced her to drink alcohol, mixing it into her drink without consent.

This has led to him recording her without permission and using the footage to blackmail her. The complainant sought a permanent injunction against Kumar, who allegedly continued to threaten her. —*PTI*

2 ministers ask top brass to stop CM change row

BENGALURU, 7 OCT

Two senior Ministers in Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet on Tuesday urged the Congress High Command to put an end to speculations about a possible change in Chief Minister later this year.

Speculations about a change of guard in the State "November revolution" have been doing the rounds recently.

"High Command has to say -- full stop. If they say, it will be good, if not it will create confusion among bureaucracy and within the party. In my opinion a full stop has to be put to this topic at the earliest," PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi told press.

Concurring with Jarkiholi, Home Minister G Parameshwara too asked the party leadership to resolve the uncertainty.

Congress workers protest against advocate Rakesh, who threw shoes at CJI BR Gavai, in Bengaluru on Tuesday — PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

"What Satish Jarkiholi has said is right, every day we are seeing, each one (from the party) giving different statements in the media. His (Jarkiholi) statement that the issue should be resolved is correct. The High Command will do it. The High Command is aware and know what medicine has to be given in what situation... As Satish Jarkiholi has said, I too will say -- solve the confusion," he said. —*PTI*

- "High Command has to say -- full stop. If they say, it will be good, if not it will create confusion among bureaucracy and within the party. In my opinion a full stop has to be put to this topic at the earliest," Satish Jarkiholi said.

4 KILLED IN KOLAR ACCIDENT

Chennai Expressway becomes death trap

KOLAR, 7 OCT

A large number of accidents on the newly constructed Chennai Expressway continued with yet another taking place on Monday evening, where three people died, more than 20 people were injured and one succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

The incident occurred on Monday around 7.30pm near Kalkere village under Bangarpet limits, when a speeding canter vehicle going towards Bengaluru lost control and hit a tempo traveller, which was taking a U-turn on the expressway from Kalkere towards Bengaluru. The impact from the crash caused the tempo to ram into an ambulance, which was also heading towards Bengaluru. Both the drivers of the tempo and the ambulance, along with a person who was conducting a survey nearby, died on spot, while the canter driver succumbed to his injuries at the Bangarpet hospital.

The tempo consisted of more than 20 people, including the driver, who were injured in the accident. The injured were rushed to the Bangarpet Hospital where they received preliminary treatment.

The tempo traveller was carrying 20 people when it crashed on Monday — PHOTO: SALAR

Among the four deceased, three were identified as Vikram Paul, ambulance driver; Shivaraj, tempo driver and Ashok, surveyor.

The catering personnel were on their way back to Bengaluru after a foundation-laying event in Ithandahalli in Bangarpet taluk, which had ended around 6.00pm.

PREVIOUS ACCIDENTS

Another major accident occurred during March where five people died when their car collided with a two-wheeler coming from the opposite direction.

In May, another accident took place where a media intern was killed when his car crashed onto a divider.

Two other accidents took place during the month of June and July as well.

KGF district police have been taking strict action against speeding vehicles and have banned the entry of two-wheelers into the expressway. Police have set up surveillance cameras to prevent entry of two-wheeler. —*Salar News*

3 killed after bus runs over devotees in Koppal

KOPPAL, 7 OCT

Three people were killed and four others injured after a private sleeper coach bus ran over a group of devotees participating in a padayatra near Kookanapalli village in Koppal district, police said on Monday.

The incident took place on National Highway 50 of Koppal district when a private sleeper coach bus going from Sindagi to Bengaluru lost control and ran over devotees who were on a 3-hour padayatra (walk) to the Huligemma temple in Huligi village, resulting in the death of three people and leaving four people seriously injured.

The deceased were identified as Annapurna, 40; Prakash, 25 and Sharanappa, 19, who are from Tarihala village in Rona taluk of Gadag district.

The injured were immediately shifted to the Koppal District Hospital for treatment.

The bus driver was arrested, police said.

Superintendent of Police Dr Ram Arasiddi visited the scene of incident and inspected the site. —*Salar News*

Police inspect the site after the bus accident — PHOTO: SALAR

PHOTO: ANI

Bihar folk singer Maithili hints at entering poll fray

JABALPUR, 7 OCT

Ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, popular folk singer Maithili Thakur on Tuesday indicated her willingness to make her political debut from her hometown Benipatti in Madhubani district. Thakur recently met with BJP national general secretary and Bihar organisation in-charge Vinod Tawde and Union minister Nityanand Rai, sparking speculation about her contesting the elections. The folk singer, who was here to perform at the Narmada Mahotsav, told reporters that she has a special connection with her hometown and starting her political career from there would teach her a lot. *—PTI*

BJP moves SC against Vijay over Karur stampede

CHENNAI, 7 OCT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear on 10 October a plea seeking a CBI probe into the Karur stampede, which killed 41 people and injured over 60 during a rally by actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) on 27 September. The appeal, filed by BJP leader Uma Anandan, challenges a Madras High Court order refusing a CBI investigation. Vijay, criticised for not visiting victims' families, reached out via WhatsApp video calls on October 6, offering condolences and support. The High Court had earlier blamed the TVK leadership, organisers, and police, and formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the incident. *—PTI*

At Rs 3,135 cr, Hyderabad sees record land auction

HYDERABAD, 7 OCT

A 7.67-acre plot in Raidurg, Hyderabad's IT corridor, was auctioned by the Telangana government for Rs 1,358 crore, at a record Rs 177 crore per acre, officials said. Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation conducted the auction, which saw 12 bidders. Another 11-acre plot in the same area fetched Rs 1,556.5 crore, or Rs 141.5 crore per acre, marking one of India's costliest land deals, with five bidders. This could generate additional revenue of up to Rs 3,135 crore from registration fees, stamp duty, and other charges. The record-breaking sales highlight Raidurg's status as a premium destination, reflecting strong investor confidence in Hyderabad's growth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Sabarimala gold plating row: TDB officer suspended

T'PURAM, 7 OCT

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) on Tuesday suspended Deputy Devaswom Commissioner B Murari Babu over alleged irregularities in the gold-plating of Sabarimala temple's Dwarapalaka idols. Babu had reported in 2019 that the idols were copper-plated—a claim now under scrutiny after 4.5 kg of gold reportedly went unaccounted during restoration. The Kerala High Court has ordered an SIT probe. Babu denies wrongdoing, saying he followed procedure with the temple's chief priest. Opposition UDF MLAs disrupted the Kerala Assembly, demanding the Devaswom Minister's resignation. Speaker AN Shamseer adjourned the House amid uproar. The ruling LDF accused the Opposition of politicising the issue. The Assembly reconvenes Wednesday. *—PTI*

Bihar CPI(ML)L rejects RJD's 19 seat offer

Cong to finalise Bihar candidates in a meeting today; BJP in-charge meets Chirag Paswan

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Seat-sharing discussions among key alliances ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections intensified on Tuesday, with the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation rejecting a seat offer from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)-led Mahagathbandhan.

According to party sources, the CPI(ML)L was offered 19 seats — the same as in 2020, when it had won 12. The party, however, termed the offer "undignified" and noted that three of its previous seats were changed. It had initially demanded 40 seats, but is now preparing a revised proposal for around 30 seats, marking a 25 per cent reduction.

"We didn't just win our seats; we helped secure votes in surrounding areas as well," a party source said. "All options are open" if the revised offer is not accepted.

RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and CPI(ML)L General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya are team INDIA bloc **PHOTO: PTI**

The Mahagathbandhan includes the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML)L, and Mukesh Sahni's Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP).

Meanwhile, the Congress' Central Election Committee is set to meet on Wednesday to finalise candidates, even as alliance seat-sharing remains unsettled. Insiders say the party is keen to avoid delays ahead of the two-phase polls on November 6 and 11. Votes will be counted on November 14.

- Party sources said the CPI(ML)L was offered 19 seats — the same as in 2020, when it had won 12. The party, however, termed the offer "undignified"

On the NDA side, BJP's Bihar in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan held talks with LJP (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan regarding seat-sharing. Paswan, whose party won five Lok Sabha seats in 2024, is seeking constituencies favourable to his party and wants a couple of assembly seats in each of those five areas.

Paswan's party reminded the BJP that it was allotted 43 seats in the 2015 elections when JD(U) was not part of the NDA. Although LJP(RV) won only one seat in 2020, it significantly hurt JD(U)'s performance. Pradhan has also met other NDA allies, including HAM(S), RLJP, and JD(U), which shares equal footing with BJP in the current government. *—PTI*

Cong questions EC over Bihar voter roll clean-up

Congress on Tuesday slammed EC over its Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in Bihar, questioning how many non-citizens were actually removed from the electoral roll.

Congress' Jairam Ramesh said the EC lacked the "integrity and courage" to disclose figures, fearing further exposure.

He cited a media analysis that claimed the SIR failed on accuracy, equity, and completeness. The Opposition has accused the EC of acting under BJP influence, a charge denied by the poll body. *—PTI*

'STOPPED INDIA-PAK WAR'

'Tariffs helped me stop wars'

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 7 OCT

US President Donald Trump on Monday described his use of tariffs as a tool to prevent wars, claiming his communication to India and Pakistan during their recent conflict was 'very effective.'

"Tariffs are very important for the United States. Not only do we make hundreds of billions of dollars, but we are a peacekeeper because of tariffs," Trump said in the Oval Office.

He added, "I use tariffs to stop wars. If you look at India and Pakistan, they were ready to go at it. Seven planes were shot down... what I said was very effective. They stopped. And that was based on tariffs. It was based on trade."

Trump reiterated that his administration ended seven wars, including conflicts involving India-Pakistan, Cambodia-Thailand, Kosovo-Serbia, the Congo-Rwanda, Israel-Iran, Egypt-Ethiopia, and Armenia-Azerbaijan. "If I didn't have tariffs to throw around, there would be at least four wars raging right now, with thousands of people a day being killed," he claimed.

Since 10 May, when Trump announced on social media that Indo-Pak had agreed to a 'full and immediate' ceasefire after a long night of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim dozens of times that he "helped settle" their conflict.

India, however, has consistently denied any third-party intervention. The country launched Operation Sindoor on 7 May in retaliation for the Pahalgam attack and reached a cessation of hostilities with Pakistan on 10 May following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised in Parliament that no foreign leader asked India to stop the operation. *—PTI*

TMC accuses BJP of vandalising its Tripura headquarters

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

TMC on Tuesday alleged that the headquarters of its Tripura unit in Agartala was vandalised by members of the ruling BJP's youth wing.

The incident happened a day after an attack on BJP MP Khagen Murmu and MLA Sankar Ghosh in a flood-hit area in northern West Bengal.

State TMC President Santanu Saha alleged that a large group of BJP Yuva Morcha activists attacked the party office at the Motor Stand area.

"They damaged some furniture and the signboard of the party office. The attackers also raised slogans, condemning the Trinamool Congress," he said.

Saha said the TMC had informed the local police station about the possibility of an attack, but no action was taken.

State BJP's chief spokesperson Subrata Chakraborty was not available for a comment.

The TMC delegation will comprise MPs Pratima Mondal, Sushmita Dev and Saayoni Ghosh, West Bengal minister Birbaha Hansda, and party leaders Kunal Ghosh and Sudip Raha.

TMC leaders in Kolkata said the delegation's visit is aimed at sending a "strong political message" against what they alleged BJP's "culture of violence and intimidation" in the Northeast.

Meanwhile, the BJP held a demonstration in Agartala over the attack on Murmu, who is in the ICU with a fractured bone below his eye, and Ghosh in north Bengal. *—PTI*

BJP says B'deshi infiltrators attacked its Bengal MP, MLA

KOLKATA/SILIGURI, 7 OCT

The political storm over Monday's attack on two BJP leaders in flood and landslide-hit north Bengal escalated on Tuesday, with the Centre demanding a report from the TMC government and BJP leaders alleging the involvement of "jihadi elements".

The confrontation deepened as the death toll from last week's devastating flash floods and landslides in Darjeeling district climbed to 32. Several people remain missing, with thousands still stranded in the hills and plains.

In a surprise move, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited BJP MP Khagen Murmu at a private hospital in Siliguri **(in pic)**, where he is undergoing treatment for serious facial injuries sustained during a mob assault in Nagrakata, Jalpaiguri district. Television visuals showed Banerjee speaking with Murmu and his family, enquiring about his health and offering assistance.

"If you need further treatment elsewhere, please let me know," Banerjee said, after consulting the doctors.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee meets BJP MP Khagen Murmu at a private hospital, in Siliguri, West Bengal **PHOTO: PTI**

However, she did not visit Siliguri BJP MLA Sankar Ghosh, also injured in the same attack, reportedly due to their strained political relationship.

While BJP leaders welcomed Banerjee's hospital visit as "political courtesy," they slammed the police for inaction. "It is appalling that not a single arrest has been made 24 hours after the incident," said BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya. The Lok Sabha Secretariat has sought a factual note from the Union Home Ministry, which in turn is to collect details from the Bengal government within three days. Union Minister Kiran Rijiju and LoP Suvendu Adhikari, who visited the affected areas, warned of a possible Privilege Motion if delays continue.

Adhikari and Bhattacharya alleged that "jihadi elements," including infiltrators and JMB operatives, were behind the attack, demanding an NIA probe. The TMC dismissed the allegations as baseless.

Meanwhile, fresh tensions flared in Alipurduar, where BJP MLA Manoj Oraon alleged a TMC-led assault during relief distribution. The ruling party countered that Oraon had attacked an elderly man first. *—PTI*

PM Narendra Modi posted a pic of him taking an oath for the first time as the Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2021 **PHOTO: X/NARENDRAMODI**

India gets rly boost as PM marks 25 yrs in govt

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday marked the beginning of his 25th year as a head of government, reflecting on his journey since first taking oath as Gujarat Chief Minister on 7 October 2001. In a series of posts on X, Modi expressed gratitude to the people of India for their continued support.

Modi asserted that India has moved from an era of "corruption, cronyism and policy paralysis" to one of robust welfare, citing achievements such as healthcare access, social security, and the claimed upliftment of 25 crore people from poverty.

To mark the occasion, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved four major multi-tracking railway projects worth Rs 24,634 crore across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Chhattisgarh. The projects, totalling 894 km, include: Wardha–Bhusawal (314 km), Gondia–Dongargarh (84 km), Vadodara–Ratlam (259 km), and Itarsi–Bhopal–Bina (84 km). Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will decongest routes and benefit 3,600 villages. *—PTI*

India's defence procurement hits Rs 1.2L cr

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Government of India procured military hardware and weapons worth Rs 1,20,000 crore from domestic sources by the end of 2024-25, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday, highlighting the government's push for self-reliance amid evolving security challenges.

"In 2021-22, our capital acquisition from domestic sources was around Rs 74,000 crore, but by 2024-25 it has increased to approximately Rs 1,20,000 crore. This change is not just about data, but also about mindset," Singh said at an event.

He stressed the importance of strengthening India's defence industries to meet modern battlefield requirements, particularly non-contact warfare such as drones, anti-drone systems, and advanced air defense.

"The government is fully aware of the changing nature of modern warfare. Operation Sindoor demonstrated the increasing role of technology in conflict," he said. Singh highlighted several policy initiatives introduced over the past decade to encourage indigenous design, development, and manufacturing of defence equipment. *—PTI*

INDIA AT UN

'Pak sanctioned genocidal rape of 4 lakh'

UNITED NATIONS, 7 OCT

India delivered a scathing response to Pakistan at the UN Security Council on Monday, labelling its neighbour a country that "bombs its own people" and sanctioned the "genocidal mass rape of 4,00,000 women" during the 1971 Operation Searchlight in then-East Pakistan. This came as Islamabad attempted to highlight the "plight" of Kashmiri women at the forum.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, made the remarks during a UNSC open debate on "Women, Peace and Security", chaired by Russia. Responding to Pakistan's reference to Jammu and Kashmir, Harish said, "Every year, we are unfortunately fated to listen to the delusional tirade of Pakistan... The world sees through Pakistan's propaganda."

Operation Searchlight, launched on 25 March, 1971, was a brutal military crackdown by the Pakistani army in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), resulting in mass civilian killings and sexual violence.

India's UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish made the remarks during a UNSC debate on 'Women, Peace and Security' **PHOTO: PTI**

Harish highlighted India's unblemished record on the women, peace, and security agenda. He underscored India's legacy in UN peacekeeping, noting the early deployment of Indian women medical officers to the Congo in the 1960s—among the first female peacekeepers in UN history.

He said India remains committed to the global agenda and is ready to share expertise with Global South partners to develop collective solutions. In February 2025, India hosted the International Conference on Women Peacekeepers from the Global South, with delegates from 35 nations discussing actionable strategies to enhance women's roles in peacekeeping, including combating sexual exploitation and harnessing technology.

Harish concluded that India sees women not as symbols, but as essential agents of peace. *—PTI*

- India's response came as Islamabad attempted to highlight the "plight" of Kashmiri women at the forum. India slammed Pakistan for continuing its "delusional tirades", particularly regarding Jammu and Kashmir

Haryana ADGP found dead, suicide suspected

CHANDIGARH, 7 OCT

A senior Haryana police officer, Y Puran Kumar, was found dead with a gunshot wound at his residence in Chandigarh's upscale Sector 11 on Tuesday afternoon. Police officials suspect suicide.

Kumar, a 2001-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, was serving as Inspector General at the Police Training Centre (PTC) in Sunaria, Rohtak. The incident was reported to the Chandigarh Police around 1.30pm, following which a team led by the Sector 11 Station House Officer rushed to the spot.

Chandigarh Senior Superintendent of Police Kanwardeep Kaur confirmed the death, stating, "A reported suicide had taken place. The body was identified as that of Y Puran Kumar, IPS officer." A Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) team has been called in to examine the site thoroughly.

Authorities are questioning individuals who were present in the house at the time of the incident to gather further details. Police have not yet confirmed the recovery of any suicide note.

Kumar's wife, Amneet K Kumar, an IAS officer and Commissioner and Secretary of the Department of Foreign Cooperation, Haryana, is currently in Japan as part of a delegation led by Chief Minister Nayab Saini. Investigations into the circumstances of the death are ongoing. *—PTI*

Colombo-Chennai Air India flight suffers bird hit

CHENNAI, 7 OCT

An Air India flight from Colombo to Chennai with 158 passengers on board encountered a bird strike on Tuesday, leading to the cancellation of its planned return journey. Airport authorities confirmed that the aircraft landed safely and all passengers disembarked without injury. The bird strike was identified upon landing at the Chennai airport. "The aircraft has been grounded for inspection," an official stated, adding that thorough checks were conducted by Air India engineers. Due to the incident, the return journey was cancelled, but another aircraft was arranged for 137 passengers, who subsequently departed for Colombo. *—PTI*

Flood-hit Assam, Gujarat get Rs 707 cr

Haryana, MP, R'than get Rs 903 cr for fire services; M'rashtra gives Rs 31,628 cr to farmers

Around 68 lakh hectares of farmland across 29 districts and 253 talukas were affected in Maharashtra **PHOTO: PTI**

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Centre and the Maharashtra government on Tuesday announced major financial relief packages for flood-affected states and to bolster disaster response systems.

A high-level committee chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah approved Rs 707.97 crore in additional central assistance for Assam and Gujarat, which were hit by floods and landslides in 2024. Of this, Rs 313.69 crore has been allocated to Assam and Rs 394.28 crore to Gujarat under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), subject to adjustment against the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The government approved Rs 903.67 crore to expand and modernise fire services in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, with Rs 676.33 crore as central assistance, Rs 117.19 crore for Haryana, Rs 397.54 crore for Madhya Pradesh, and Rs 388.94 crore for Rajasthan. This is in addition to Rs 13,603.20 crore already released under the SDRF to 27 states and Rs 2,024.04 crore under the NDRF to 12 states in 2025-26, along with funds from State and National Disaster Mitigation Funds.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis announced a Rs 31,628 crore compensation package for farmers affected by floods and heavy rains. Farmers will receive Rs 47,000 in cash and Rs 3 lakh per hectare under the Employment Guarantee Scheme for damaged farmland, Rs 32,000 per livestock lost, Rs 10,000 per hectare for other crop damage, and Rs 30,000 per damaged well. Around 68 lakh hectares across 29 districts and 253 talukas were affected. Compensation will be directly credited to farmers' bank accounts, while 45 lakh insured farmers will receive Rs 17,000 per hectare under crop insurance. *—PTI*

Zubeen's family seeks answers about his death

GUWAHATI, 7 OCT

Zubeen Garg's wife, Garima Saikia Garg, and sister, Palme Borthakur, are demanding clarity on the circumstances surrounding the singer's death in Singapore last month. Garima expressed her grief in a Facebook post, stating, "...we will be together again, very soon Goldie... But now, I/we all want to know the reason why you went away physically from us... Why? This is a big question." Borthakur echoed this sentiment, urging support for justice. The second post-mortem report, returned to the government for discretion, remains confidential. Investigations by the CID have seen several arrests, and a Special Investigation Team has summoned key figures linked to Zubeen's last moments. *—PTI*

MP orders free care for cough-syrup victims

BHOPAL, 7 OCT

The Madhya Pradesh government will bear all treatment costs for children suffering kidney infections after consuming contaminated Coldrif cough syrup in Chhindwara and Betul, officials said Tuesday.

As many as 14 children in Chhindwara have died of suspected renal failure linked to the toxic cough syrup, while nine others are under treatment at a hospital in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

Two drug inspectors and a deputy Food and Drug Administration director have been suspended, the drug controller transferred, and Dr Praveen Soni arrested for alleged negligence.

A case has been filed against manufacturer Sresan Pharmaceutical, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, and Coldrif sales have been banned after tests found a highly toxic substance.

Punjab has also banned its sale after batch SR-13 was found to contain 46.28 per cent Diethylene Glycol.

Kerala and Karnataka have tightened drug safety rules amid nationwide confiscations.

Meanwhile, a PIL by Advocate Vishal Tiwari seeks a Supreme Court–monitored probe, CBI investigation, and creation of a National Judicial Commission to oversee inquiries into cough syrup–related deaths and prevent regulatory lapses. *—PTI*

North Bengal recovering after deluge

DARJEELING/MIRIK, 7 OCT

Relentless rains and landslides in north Bengal have claimed at least 30 lives, with several people still missing.

While roads have partially reopened two days later, bringing some relief to stranded tourists and residents, recovery in the hills is slow.

Clear skies on Tuesday offered a moment of solace, but emergency crews are still pressing on with rescue operations and restoring damaged infrastructure.

North Bengal Development Minister Udayan Guha warned the death toll may rise. Tourists are now exiting via the partially restored Hill Cart and Pankhabari Roads, though other key routes like Mirik remain cut off due to bridge collapses and fresh cracks, making travel risky.

Relief efforts continue across affected districts, with departments on high alert. In areas like Mirik, Bijanbari, and Sukhia Pokhri, many families whose homes were destroyed are staying in tents and shelters, with rescue teams reaching remote ares on foot.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses locals during a visit to a disaster-hit town, at Mirik, in Darjeeling district **PHOTO: PTI**

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited Mirik, distributed compensation, and announced Rs 5 lakh aid for bereaved families. A political row has erupted after Banerjee accused the Centre of neglecting flood management. The Jal Shakti Ministry rebutted her claims, stating Rs 1,290 crore has already been released and that 62 flood-related projects worth Rs 5,648 crore are underway in Bengal. *—PTI*

Bengal's tea output plunges 64% amid rains

Kolkata, 7 Oct

Torrential rains in North Bengal have hit small tea growers (STGs) in Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar, says Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations. Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty said Nagrakata and Banerhat blocks were worst affected. Over 50,000 STGs, producing 64% of Bengal's tea, face submerged gardens, silt-damaged bushes, poor roads, and rising worker absenteeism, disrupting leaf transport and causing major financial losses.

Baby found dead in hospital, animal attack suspected

BALLIA, 7 OCT

A newborn, abandoned by its mother at a local hospital, has been found dead, with suspicions of an animal attack. Dr SK Yadav, the Chief Medical Superintendent of the district hospital, reported that the incident occurred on Sunday night when an unmarried woman arrived at the emergency ward with abdominal pain and subsequently delivered the baby. She left the newborn in a secluded area before departing. "By the time security noticed the newborn, the baby had died," Yadav stated, noting that the infant's limbs showed signs of an animal attack. A post-mortem has been ordered and an investigation is underway, according to local authorities. *—PTI*

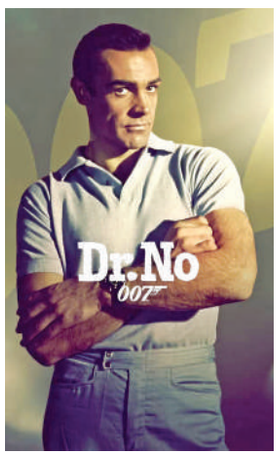


PHOTO: XXX

Amazon Prime cuts guns in 007 Bond posters

LOS ANGELES, 7 OCT

Amazon Prime Video has removed its 'James Bond' artwork following online criticism after fans noticed the iconic agent's gun had been airbrushed out. Prime Video UK released posters last week featuring 007 without firearms; the Walther PPK was edited out of hand in films like 'Dr. No' and 'Goldeneye,'while in 'A View to a Kill,' Roger Moore's arms were altered to omit the gun. Writer Scott McCrea described this as "nothing less than cultural vandalism." Actor Rufus Jones jested that the modified posters suggest Sean Connery and Pierce Brosnan think viewers are "wankers." Following the backlash, the streamer has replaced the artwork. *—PTI*

A fire-affected victim being taken to the hospital. **PHOTO: PTI**

Ignored warnings led to Jaipur hospital fire

JAIPUR, 7 OCT

Days before the devastating fire at Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital that claimed six lives, trauma centre in-charge Dr Anurag Dhakad had warned authorities about electric current in the walls, leaking roofs, and faulty electrical panels.

"I had written multiple letters to higher authorities about serious maintenance issues and potential dangers, but no action was taken," Dr Dhakad said.

The blaze broke out on Sunday night in the neuro ICU on the second floor of the trauma centre, killing six of 11 critical patients.

14 others from a nearby ICU were evacuated, of which two later died.

The government, however, confirmed six deaths due to the fire.

Following the incident, the state government removed Dr Sushil Bhati, superintendent of SMS Hospital, and Dr Dhakad from their posts, suspended executive engineer Mukesh Singhal, and cancelled the fire safety firm's tender.

An inquiry has been ordered into the cause and whether prior warnings were ignored.

Family members alleged hospital staff abandoned patients when the fire erupted.

Vikas, a ward boy, told PTI that he and other staff members rescued as many people as they could.

The state announced Rs 10 lakh compensation for each victim's family. *—PTI*

Uttarakhand abolishes Madrasa Board Act

DEHRADUN, 7 OCT

The Uttarakhand Madrasa Board will be abolished, and all minority educational institutions will come under a uniform law after Governor Lt. Gen. Gurmeet Singh (Retd.) approved the Uttarakhand Minority Education Bill, 2025, officials said Monday.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said the approval "paved the way" for a transparent, accountable, and quality-driven education system.

The law creates an authority to regulate and recognise minority institutions. With its implementation, the Madrasa Education Board Act, 2016, and the Non-Government Arabic and Persian Madrasa Recognition Rules, 2019, will lapse on 1 July, 2026. Unlike previous provisions limited to Muslims, the law extends recognition to Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, and Parsi institutions. The authority will align standards with the Uttarakhand Board of School Education and ensure fair evaluation. Dhami said reform was vital to address irregularities in scholarships, mid-day meals, and madrasa management, adding it would "strengthen educational excellence and social harmony." *— PTI*

My wife turns into Naagin: UP man reports to DM

SITAPUR, 7 OCT

A man has approached the Sitapur district magistrate with an unusual complaint, claiming he can't sleep at night out of fear as his wife "turns into a nagin".

The complainant, Meraj from Lodhasa village in Mahmudabad tehsil, narrated his "ordeal" before District Magistrate Abhishek Anand during a Public Grievance Redressal Day on 4 October.

Meraj alleged that his wife, Nasimun, is mentally unstable and spends the nights pretending to be a "nagin" (female serpent), hissing and scaring him. He claimed that despite his repeated pleas, local police failed to take action on it, forcing him to approach the district administration for help.

The officials present at the event were reportedly taken aback by the unusual complaint, even as the DM directed police to look into the matter. *—PTI*

Shilpa Shetty denies role in firm's affairs

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

Actor Shilpa Shetty told the Mumbai police that she did not look into the affairs of the company she co-founded with her husband Raj Kundra, during her questioning in the Rs 60 crore cheating case.

A team from the police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) recorded the actor's statement at her residence on 4 October and questioned her for more than four hours, the official said.

Shetty and her husband, Raj Kundra, were directors of Best Deal TV Private Limited, a home shopping and online retail platform.

A case was registered against them on 14 August for allegedly duping businessman Deepak Kothari, 60, of Rs 60 crore in a loan-cum-investment deal.

The EOW had earlier recorded Kundra's statement and issued a Look Out Circular against the duo. *—PTI*

'28 INJURIES NOT FROM FALL'

Court gives lifer to Thane man for assaulting wife and son

THANE, 7 OCT

A Thane court has sentenced a 43-year-old man to life imprisonment for attempting to murder his wife and son with a sickle in 2019, rejecting his claim that the injuries were caused by a fall.

Additional Sessions Judge GG Bhansali, in an order passed on 4 October, said the 28 serious injuries sustained by the wife, Vaijayanti Patil, could not have resulted from falling on a kitchen rack, as claimed by the defence.

The accused, Pramod Kanha Patil, a jobless alcoholic, attacked his wife on 26 October, 2019, with a fish-cutting sickle inside their home in Thane city. The assault left her with multiple skull fractures and brain injuries, rendering her unconscious for nearly 40 days. Their younger son, Pruthvi Patil, was also injured while trying to protect his mother. He and his elder brother Raj testified as eyewitnesses. The recovery of the weapon, blood-stained clothes, and blood marks in the house corroborated the charges.

Despite the accused's plea for leniency citing good conduct in jail, the court refused, noting, "Undue sympathy... would do more harm to the justice system."

Patil was sentenced to life imprisonment under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC. He also received three months' rigorous imprisonment and a Rs 1,000 fine under Section 504 (intentional insult). The sentences will run consecutively. *—PTI*

Curfew relaxed after 36 hours of unrest in Cuttack town

CUTTACK, 7 OCT

Curfew was eased in violence-hit Cuttack on Tuesday after 24 hours of calm, Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh said, adding that Monday's 12-hour VHP bandh passed peacefully.

The 36-hour curfew, imposed from 5 October night to 7 October morning after two days of clashes that injured 31 people, including 10 police personnel, left several shops gutted.

Violence first erupted during a Durga idol immersion in Dargha Bazar on Friday, followed by another clash Sunday when police halted a VHP rally. Internet services were barred till 7 pm Tuesday to curb rumours. *—PTI*

UP Muslim woman claims denial of treatment

JAUNPUR, 7 OCT

A Muslim woman in Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur has alleged that a doctor at the district women's hospital refused to treat her due to her religion, a claim denied by hospital authorities.

Shama Parveen, a resident of Biribari village, was brought to the hospital around 9.30pm on 30 September for delivery. According to Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) Dr Mahendra Gupta, a woman doctor on duty examined her.

However, on 1 October, a video surfaced on social media in which Parveen alleged that the doctor told her: "I will not treat a Muslim woman. I will not conduct your delivery," and instructed staff not to take her to the operation theatre.

Dr Gupta said the doctor denied allegations, and an inquiry was conducted. The findings have been sent to higher authorities.

Meanwhile, police have booked two local journalists for allegedly entering the labour room without permission, filming the video, and damaging hospital property.

The incident has triggered political outrage.

Samajwadi Party MLA Ragini Sonkar called the case "shameful", blaming growing communal tensions, and criticised the FIR against journalists. *—PTI*

WINTER WONDER

Tourists in Gulmarg had a snow-filled blast on Tuesday after a fresh snowfall turned the town into a winter wonderland. But elsewhere in Jammu and Kashmir, the weather caused chaos. Heavy snow and continuous rain led to landslides, shutting the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh highways, along with Mughal and Sinthan roads. Pilgrimages to Vaishno Devi and Machail Mata were suspended for a third day. Schools across Jammu division closed. Udhampur recorded 100.2 mm rainfall, while Jammu city shivered with a sharp drop to −21.3°C
PHOTO: PTI

Starmer's India visit to focus on trade, tech ties

Keir Starmer will begin his first official visit to India as British Prime Minister on Wednesday, with talks between both countries set to cover the entire gamut of the bilateral partnership, including trade and investment and technology ties.

The two-day visit, at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will see both leaders take stock of the progress made across all aspects of the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in line with "Vision 2035" -- a 10-year roadmap agreed alongside the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in July to build on the key pillars of the partnership.

The focus of the Modi-Starmer bilateral talks will be on the opportunities presented by the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), as the FTA is known, which is set to remove tariffs on over 90 per cent of goods once it is ratified by the UK Parliament.

"The UK Prime Minister's visit to India comes at a pivotal moment in the evolution of our bilateral relationship, defined increasingly by partnership, shared prosperity, and mutual respect," said Richard Heald, who is part of the prime ministerial delegation.

"The UK-India corridor stands as one of the most promising economic relationships globally, and we look forward to supporting its continued growth - grounded in innovation, opportunity, and mutual ambition," said Heald, Chair of the UK India Business Council (UKIBC), who is also set to address a session on Indian entry strategies for UK small and medium enterprises.

The British PM will be accompanied by a delegation made up of over 100 business leaders, university Vice-Chancellors and cultural Chiefs, reflecting a mission to boost trade and investment, technology and education ties.

Lord Karan Bilimoria, Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) UK, said he is "absolutely delighted" at such a substantial PM delegation after a gap of nearly nine years because it conveys an unequivocal message that "Britain means business when it comes to India".

Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, centre, with his business delegation before departing London Heathrow Airport on Tuesday, as they head to Mumbai
PHOTO: PTI

"The timing is excellent because it is literally within three months of signing the FTA at Chequers at the end of July that both Prime Ministers will be meeting face to face in each other's countries again, which is almost unprecedented," said Bilimoria.

The visit coinciding with both navies undertaking their joint Exercise Konkan in the Arabian Sea is symbolic of the opportunity for the delivery of significant defence technological and industrial partnerships between Indian and UK companies, including on naval electric propulsion, said Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, Senior Fellow for South Asia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London.

He believes Starmer's first official visit to India takes place at a strategically significant moment for both countries.

"For India, stung by the eye-watering tariffs imposed by the Trump administration amidst concerns over the next Trump tweet, and with little appetite for a pivot towards Russia or China, it encourages diversification of its foreign and security partnerships towards the UK and the EU," said Roy-Chaudhury.

The much-anticipated visit will see both Starmer and Modi deliver keynote addresses at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai, spotlighting the India-UK Technology Security Initiative (TSI) clinched last year with an aim to enhance bilateral collaboration in critical and emerging technologies such as telecoms, AI, quantum computing, biotechnology and critical minerals.

Jyoti Vij, Director General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said Starmer's visit comes at a defining moment when the promise of CETA could be translated to tangible business outcomes.

"We expect this engagement to unlock new opportunities in advanced manufacturing, green finance, digital innovation, and mobility of skilled professionals — creating a future-ready partnership that supports growth, sustainability, and shared prosperity across both economies," she said.

British Airways CEO Sean Doyle, also part of the British PM's delegation, wrote in 'The Sunday Times' over the weekend about plans to expand its services to India as a "critical enabler of UK-India trade".

According to the latest UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) statistics, total trade in goods and services between India and the UK is now estimated at around 44.1 billion pounds.

The trade deal signed during Modi's UK visit on 24 July is expected to significantly boost these figures, with a target to at least double bilateral trade by 2030. —*PTI*

SALAR سالار

Drone thief rumours, mob attacks & fear grip UP

What began as a rumour in western Uttar Pradesh a few months ago -- of thieves using drones to scout rooftops before robberies -- has now drifted eastwards, gripping one district after another in waves of panic and suspicion.

From Rae Bareli to Kanpur and from Etawah to Ballia, stories of "drone chor" have transformed into a kind of rural folklore, whispered at tea stalls and shouted in village lanes long after dusk.

The fear, though said to be born of fiction by the police, has begun to turn deadly. In Rae Bareli, police arrested five men on Saturday for allegedly lynching Hariom, a 38-year-old man from Fatehpur, after mistaking him for a drone thief.

The police said Hariom, reportedly mentally unstable, was walking to his in-laws' home in Dandepur Jamunapur when a mob surrounded him and accused him of being a member of a gang marking houses with drones for theft. He was beaten with belts and sticks and died soon after.

Superintendent of Police Yashveer Singh confirmed the arrests and said Unchahar Station House Officer (SHO) Sanjay Kumar had been transferred for negligence. "The local police were aware that rumours were spreading in the area," Singh told PTI.

Barely a day before the killing, Rae Bareli police arrested two men, Mohammed Junaid of Lucknow and Mohammed Owaish of Sitapur, for flying a drone without permission near the PAC colony.

The duo, who run a furniture business, were using the drone to film videos "for fun", the police said, but their actions triggered fresh rumours and panic in nearby villages. "In an already tense atmosphere, even a harmless (drone) flight looks like a threat," said Mill Area SHO Ajay Kumar Rai.

The anxiety has also found new victims in Kanpur. In the Kherasa locality of Bidhnu, a mentally challenged man was brutally thrashed last week after villagers mistook him for a drone operator with criminal motives. "Not a single verified drone-related theft has been reported anywhere in Kanpur," Superintendent of Police (SP) Prabal Pratap Singh told PTI. "People must call us, and not take the law into their own hands."

In another part of the district, Ghaghukheda village in Maharajpur, locals nearly killed a man hiding in a field, suspecting him to be a part of a drone gang. The police rescued him just in time.

Similar tensions have surfaced in Madhaugarh and Rampura, where travelling hawkers have been beaten by mobs who suspected them of being thieves "marking homes". "We can't even sell utensils anymore," said a vendor from Sirsa Kalar.

Senior police officers in Kanpur have now begun community outreach drives to calm nerves and prevent flare-ups.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) (South) Dipendra Nath Chaudhary, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) Rajesh Kumar, and Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Krishnakant Yadav held public meetings in Sadh, Patara and Ghatampur, urging residents not to fall prey to rumours.

"If anyone is found spreading fake news or attacking innocents, strict action will be taken," Chaudhary said, calling the situation "an epidemic of misinformation".

The scare has since spread across the map of eastern UP -- to Hamirpur, Pratapgarh, Etawah, Deoria and even Ballia -- carried by WhatsApp forwards, doctored videos and old clips recycled as new sightings. In Shivrajpur and Etah, villagers keep night vigils, calling out "Jaagte Raho!" into the dark. Others bang tin sheets at the slightest noise, mistaking flickering lights or stars for drones.

Hamirpur SP Deeksha Sharma said not one complaint had been confirmed.

Officials in Lucknow describe the phenomenon as "collective fear syndrome". Calls to the state's UP-112 emergency line have surged, many reporting "flying lights" or "drone chor". Yet, none of the cases have yielded evidence of actual drone crimes.

To contain the chaos, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in August directed all districts to maintain drone registers, ban night flights and book anyone spreading fear under the stringent Gangster Act or NSA. The police have also been instructed to trace social media accounts pushing such rumours. The CM reiterated his warning during a programme in Balrampur district on 1 October.

"Orders have been issued to take action under the Gangster Act against those creating panic in the name of drones and to confiscate the property of those spreading terror in the name of theft," said the CM.

Still, in the countryside, the fear refuses to fade. Families in Etawah take turns staying awake at night; in Deoria, children are told not to step out after sunset; in Ballia, farmers have reported shining torches in the sky, convinced they're being watched.—*PTI*

In Shivrajpur and Etah, villagers keep night vigils, calling out 'Jaagte Raho!' into the dark. Others bang tin sheets at the slightest noise, mistaking flickering lights or stars for drones
PHOTO: AI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Another PM resigns in France; what will Macron do now?

Sébastien Lecornu
PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu has resigned after less than a month in the role, making him the fourth to leave the office in the past year and a half.

When he was first elected in 2017, President Emmanuel Macron was supposed to be a figure of calm. After five turbulent years under the presidency of François Hollande, Macron heralded a new dawn. The first centrist president of France's fifth republic managed to amass huge support through his nascent political party La République en Marche, which included many representatives who were entirely new to politics.

For the first year, this steadiness prevailed. Macron had defeated the extreme-right's Marine Le Pen in the second-round run-off of the presidential elections that year. Le Pen's supporters seemed stunned into submission. Opposition to Macron was limited. Now he can't hold on to a prime minister, can't pass any legislation and faces calls to resign.

The problems really began for Macron in 2018. First came the gilets jaunes in 2018, the mass protest movement opposing fuel prices and Macron's economic plans, including changes to retirement rights.

Then there was the pandemic, a challenge unlike anything Macron's predecessors had faced. Then, in 2022, a resurgent Le Pen made it yet again into the second-round of the election. This time the gap between the two was closer than it had been back in 2017.

In an attempt to freshen up his offering, Macron appointed Gabriel Attal as prime minister in January 2024 – the youngest person to hold the role since the fifth republic began in 1958. This approach failed. Macron's party lost dismally in the European elections of June 2024.

This led Macron to take the decision that plunged France into the unrelenting political chaos that has been on display for over a year. In a bid to halt the progress of the far right, specifically Le Pen's Rassemblement National, Macron called the now infamous snap elections of July 2024.

Stalemate in the National Assembly has been the norm ever since. None of the three major blocs (the centrists under Macron, the far right under Le Pen and her acolyte Jordan Bardella, and the left-wing alliance comprised of socialists, communists and La France Insoumise, Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed) have a majority.

Attal resigned and was replaced by the rightwing Michel Barnier, who survived just a few months in the job before losing a confidence vote in the assembly. Barnier gave way to François Bayrou, who survived slightly longer in office before also losing a confidence vote in September 2025.

Emmanuel Macron
PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Finally, the centrist Lecornu took over before resigning less than a month later. He did not even have time to chair his first cabinet meeting, let alone try to corral parliament into an agreed position on any important matters, most of all the economy.

- When he was first elected in 2017, President Emmanuel Macron was supposed to be a figure of calm. After five turbulent years under the presidency of François Hollande, Macron heralded a new dawn.

Lecornu cited a lack of willingness to compromise among the various parties in the assembly as the main reason for his decision to stand aside.

The calm Macron appeared to embody in 2017 has transformed into volatility.

The recent bloquons tous! (block everything) protest movement has shown signs of echoing the earlier gilets jaunes, bringing large parts of the nation to a halt with strikes and transport disruption.

Indeed, France has not seen scenes of such political chaos for some time. The prime ministerial churn is more akin to the lowest moments of the third republic – a regime that ended in defeat to the Nazis – than to anything since Charles de Gaulle returned to power in 1958.

All this comes at a time of constant reports of corruption, scandal and sleaze. Both former president Nicolas Sarkozy and Le Pen have recently been found guilty of corruption.

The future seems to lie in youth. Macron may now well turn to someone like Attal, who could be capable of working with two of the three blocs, but who would need to steer clear of major reforms to the economy: the price for the backing of the far-left.

The other option is to look for a way forward through a legislative election, where the main contenders for a majority would all be youthful. Whether the far-right Bardella, Mathilde Panot or a figure like Attal leading the centre, the main players are likely to be under the age of 40, and free of the images of corruption tainting some of the veterans of the political scene.

Macron will no doubt continue to see his role as a statesman on the world stage and hope that one of his followers can bring the left on board, or else hope the prospective legislative election could bring some change.

If not, these conditions means two years is a long time to wait for a change in president. Calls for Macron to go will only intensify if a way forward is not found – and soon. —*PTI*

Texas man arrested for killing Indian student

HOUSTON, 7 OCT

Fort Worth police have arrested a 23-year-old Texas man on the charge of murder of an Indian student, identified as Chandrashekar Pole, 28, at a Fort Worth gas station on Friday night. The suspect reportedly shot the student who was working a part-time shift, then fled the scene before being apprehended by officers, police said. The suspect, Richard Florez from North Richland Hills, allegedly shot Chandrashekar near Eastchase Parkway. "Florez is currently in the hospital, but he has been booked for the homicide," Officer Brad Perez, a Fort Worth Police spokesperson, was quoted as saying by NBCDFW on Monday. The Consulate General of India in Houston is assisting his family with repatriation, and a GoFundMe campaign has been launched to support them. *—PTI*

US ends Covid-19 vaccine recommendation

NEW YORK, 7 OCT

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stopped recommending Covid-19 vaccines for all Americans, leaving the decision to individuals in consultation with their doctors. The move follows recommendations by a new advisory panel appointed by US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr., who previously questioned vaccine safety. The group voted to end universal guidance that had urged annual boosters for everyone aged six months and older. Acting CDC Director Jim O'Neill endorsed the change, saying, "Informed consent is back." However, major medical groups continue to recommend vaccination for children, pregnant women, and others at high risk, warning that the new stance overemphasises rare side effects while downplaying Covid-19's dangers. *—PTI*

Cops bust UK's largest phones smuggling op

LONDON, 7 OCT

The Metropolitan Police have dismantled an international smuggling network accused of trafficking up to 40,000 stolen phones from the UK to China in the past year, about 40 per cent of all phones stolen in London. Launched after 1,000 stolen iPhones were found near Heathrow, Operation Echosteep led to as many as 46 arrests, the recovery of thousands of devices, luxury watches, laptops, and £40,000 in cash. "This is the largest operation of its kind in UK history," said London Mayor Sadiq Khan, urging phone makers to make stolen devices unusable. Det Insp Mark Gavin said the gang targeted Apple products, reselling them abroad for up to $5,000 each. *—Agencies*

NYC man decapitated by girlfriend's son

NEW YORK, 7 OCT

A New York City Sanitation Department worker, 45, was found brutally killed and decapitated inside a Staten Island home on Monday in what police described as a shocking domestic attack involving his girlfriend's 19-year-old son. Officers discovered the victim in a bathroom on Cary Avenue, West Brighton, after a 4.20 pm 911 call. A knife was still lodged in his neck. The suspect, reportedly struggling with long-term mental health issues, was arrested at the scene. Friends said the victim, nearing retirement, was the nicest guy in the world. "He didn't deserve this," said friend Louis Ortiz. Police are probing the family's domestic history as the teen remains in custody pending charges. *—Agencies*

2yrs of war: Thousands missing in Gaza

Statistics say 6,000 people are missing, but the real number is far higher

DEIR AL-BALAH/ REIM, 7 OCT

When Israeli bombs began falling, Mohammad al-Najjar, his wife and six children fled their house in southern Gaza in the dead of night, dispersing in terror alongside hundreds of others from their neighbourhood.

When the dust settled and al-Najjar huddled with his family in a shelter miles away, his son Ahmad, 23, was missing. After daybreak, the family searched in nearby hospitals and asked neighbours if they had seen him.

There was no trace. Nearly two years later, they are still looking.

"It is as if the earth has swallowed him," said al-Najjar. He spoke from the family's tent in Muwasi, along Gaza's southern coast, their ninth displacement camp since that fateful night in December 2023.

Thousands in Gaza are looking for relatives who have gone missing. Officials stats say that some 6,000 people are missing, but the real number is likely far higher. Some are buried under destroyed buildings. Others, like al-Najjar's son, simply disappeared during Israeli military operations.

al-Najjar's family is one of the thousands of Palestinians forgotten as Israelis prepared to mourn the dead Tuesday as the nation marks two years since Hamas' 7 October.

The main memorial ceremony is being organised by bereaved families, not the government, reflecting deep divisions over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership, which many blame for the failure to secure a ceasefire that would free the remaining hostages held by the militant group.

In the Gaza Strip, where Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed tens of thousands of people and razed entire towns and cities, those who can are fleeing another Israeli invasion of Gaza City while others are sheltering in place. Many are unable to make the arduous and costly journey south.

It's been two years since thousands of Hamas-led militants poured into southern Israel after a surprise barrage of rockets. They stormed army bases, farming communities and an outdoor music festival.

Some 1,200 people died in the offensive, but experts note that Israel reportedly deployed the contentious Hannibal Directive, which allows its army to shoot hostages. As such, it is unclear how many civilians Hamas killed, and how many deaths could be attributed to Israel, which has not allowed independent investigations into the matter.

Hamas abducted 251 others, most of whom have been released. Forty-eight remain inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed by Israel to be alive. The attack triggered Israel's onslaught in the Gaza Strip, which many international bodies have since deemed as a genocide. *—Agencies*

GAZA STRIP

Smoke rises following an Israeli military strik in Gaza City, as seen from the central Gaza Strip *PHOTO: PTI*

SOUTHERN ISRAEL

People visit the site of the Nova music festival in Israel, where hundreds of revelers were killed and abducted by Hamas *PHOTO: PTI*

GAZA PEACE TALKS TO ENTER 2ND DAY IN EGYPT

The second day of indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel were set to resume in Egypt, focused on a plan proposed by US President Donald Trump. After several hours of talks on Monday, an Egyptian official said the parties agreed on most of the first-phase terms, which include the release of hostages and establishing a ceasefire. The plan has received widespread international backing, and Trump told reporters on Monday that he thought there was a "really good chance" of a "lasting deal".

America First doesn't mean America alone, because all countries need allies. Superpowers need allies. China has allies. Russia has allies.

—Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister on Iran

80% of the deceased are civilians

Gazans 67,173

Israelis 1,983

WORLD FAILS STARVING CHILDREN

At least 154 children have died due to acute malnutrition

FOCUS ON GAZA, NOT ME: GRETA

ATHENS, 7 OCT

Speaking for the first time after being released from an Israeli prison, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg said the world must focus on the genocide in Gaza and not her treatment in captivity. She was among 171 people deported by Israel to Greece and Slovakia after being detained for taking part in Gaza-bound Global Sumud Flotilla.

"I can talk for a very long time about our mistreatment and abuses in our imprisonment," Thunberg said at Athens's airport. "Let me be very clear: there is a genocide going on in front of our very eyes, a live-streamed genocide. No one has the privilege to say we are not aware of what's happening."

Israel released almost all the White Europeans and Americans who they kidnapped from the flotilla, but the Brown people — Colombians, South Africans, Brazilians, Mexicans — are still locked up.

—Yusuf Omar, Global Sumud Flotilla member

"We cannot take our eyes away from Gaza, from all the places of the world that are suffering, living on the forefront of this business-as-usual system: Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan, Gaza..."

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump repeated that Thunberg should "go and see a doctor" for her "anger management problems". He said, "She is just a troublemaker... no longer into the environment... She's so angry, she's so crazy." Thunberg quipped on Instagram that it takes one to know one. *—Salar News*

Missiles to Kyiv will damage US ties: Putin

MOSCOW/ WASHINGTON, 7 OCT

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned his American counterpart Donald Trump that if the latter approved the delivery of long-range Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, Washington and Moscow's relations would be severely damaged.

Late last month, US Vice President JD Vance said the White House was considering providing Kyiv with Tomahawk missiles, which reportedly cost about USD 1.3 million each and have a range of 2,500kms, allowing them to strike Moscow and beyond.

In an interview with Russian journalist Pavel Zarubin on Saturday, Putin said that such a move by Trump would "lead to the destruction of our relations. At least the positive tendencies that have appeared in these relations."

However, Trump told reporters on Monday from the Oval Office that he wants to know what Ukraine is planning to do with the Tomahawk missiles.

"I think I want to find out what they're doing with them. You know, where are they sending them?" Trump said. Trump said he was disappointed with Putin for not making peace and has cast Russia as a "paper tiger". Putin hit back, questioning if NATO was not the "paper tiger" for failing to stop Russia's advance. *—ANI*

PHOTO: X

- US VP JD Vance said the White House was considering giving Kyiv Tomahawk missiles, which reportedly cost about USD 1.3 million each and have a range of 2,500kms

Don open to healthcare deal with Dems

WASHINGTON, 7 OCT

President Donald Trump said Monday that he'd be open to striking a deal with Democrats on the health care subsidies that are central to the shutdown fight, cracking the door slightly to negotiations that Republicans have said should only happen after the government reopens. However, he said the talks would happen if the open "our government tonight".

"I am happy to work with the Democrats on their Failed Healthcare Policies, or anything else, but first they must allow our Government to re-open," he wrote on Truth Social. He slammed them for the shutdown which came at a time when "one of the most successful Economies, including a Record Stock Market, that our Country has ever had".

Trump had earlier said "billions and billions" are being wasted, nodding to arguments from Conservatives who do not want the health subsidies extended to lessen the cost of plans offered under the Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as Obamacare.

"We have a negotiation going on right now with the Democrats that could lead to very good things," Trump said. "And I'm talking about good things with regard to health care."

Trump's comments, albeit contradictory, were a hopeful sign as the government shutdown entered its seventh day. *—Salar News with Agencies*

US President Donald Trump is set to meet Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney as they aim to relieve the mounting pressure of tariffs. The two allies stare at one of the worst periods of trade in history *PHOTO: PTI*

Should Trump persuade Xi Jinping to permanently abandon any military aggression against Taiwan Trump would undoubtedly be a Nobel Peace Prize laureate

—Lai Ching-te, Taiwan, President

Never told Bibi to stop being f***ing negative: Don

Trump denied reports that he told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop being so "f***ing negative" and "take the win" after Hamas accepted parts of Washington's proposal for ending the Gaza war "No, it's not true. He's been very positive on the deal," Trump said.

Trump delays 25% tariffs on imported truck

Trump announced on his Truth Social that medium and heavy-duty trucks imported into the US would face a 25 per cent tariff, effective 1 Nov. The decision has been pushed back from October. It is unclear if any countries would be exempt from the announcement.

House of judge who ruled against Trump set on fire, 3 injured

A fire destroyed the home of South Carolina Circuit Court Judge Diane Goodstein and her ex-senator husband, Arnold Goodstein, injuring three. Goodstein had blocked South Carolina's election commission from releasing its voter files to the Department of Justice.

TRAIN ATTACKED IN PAKISTAN

At least seven people were injured in a powerful explosion on the Jaffar Express in the Balochistan province of Pakistan on Tuesday *PHOTO: @ALPHA_DEFENSE/X*

ALARMING REPORT

Only 5% of climate goals achieved decade after Paris Pact: CEEW

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Ten years after the landmark Paris Agreement, only 5 per cent of global cooperative climate initiatives have met their stated goals, while over one-fifth have stalled or become inactive, according to the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

The report, 'Ten Years of Paris Agreement: A Stocktake of Cooperative Climate Initiatives,' found that while global climate conferences have spurred hundreds of voluntary, multi-actor initiatives involving governments, investors, and civil society, a majority lack measurable targets, budgetary support, and accountability structures needed to sustain progress.

Between 2015 and 2025, more than 475 cooperative initiatives were launched, engaging over 40,000 entities from local governments and multilateral organisations to private investors and businesses.

But the CEEW analysis of 203 such initiatives found that more than 53 per cent had no defined targets, and only 28 per cent had a dedicated budget.

"Out of the 203 initiatives, around 5 per cent of the initiatives have accomplished their stated goals. However, over a fifth of all initiatives are either stalled or inactive, with their status indeterminate or no updates since their initial announcements," it said.

The study states only 39 per cent of the initiatives showed continuous engagement, while about 32 per cent displayed little evidence of progress.

The analysis found that while initiatives often claim global participation, less than a third exclusively target Global South regions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Many initiatives combine these with Global North countries, diluting regional specificity. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Rupee settles 4P lower at 88.78 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

The rupee fell 4 paise to close at 88.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by a strong American currency overseas and unabated foreign capital outflows.

Rupee traded in a tight range as investors preferred to remain on the sidelines amid uncertainties over global trade, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, rupee opened with a marginal gain at 88.72 against the US dollar and touched the intra-day low of 88.79 and a high of 88.79 before ending the session at 88.78 (provisional), registering a loss of 4 paise from its previous closing level.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, increased 0.34 per cent to 98.13. *—PTI*

AstraZeneca can now sell cancer drugs in India

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

AstraZeneca Pharma has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to import, market, and distribute the cancer treatment drug Trastuzumab Deruxtecan in India for an expanded indication. The drug is now approved for adult patients with unresectable or metastatic HER2-positive solid tumours who have undergone prior systemic therapy and lack satisfactory alternatives. AstraZeneca stated this marks the first and only antibody–drug conjugate in India with a tumour-agnostic indication, representing a major step in precision oncology. Already approved for certain breast and gastric cancers, the therapy's broader scope will now benefit patients across multiple advanced HER2-positive cancers. *—PTI*

Biocon gets USFDA nod for anti-bacterial drug

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Biocon on Tuesday said its unit in partnership with Carnegie Pharmaceuticals LLC has received approval from the US health regulator for a genetic anti-bacterial medication. Biocon Pharma, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company, in partnership with Carnegie, has received tentative approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for the ANDA for Rifaximin Tablets, 550mg, the company said in a regulatory filing. Rifaximin tablets are indicated for reducing the risk of overt hepatic encephalopathy (HE) recurrence and to treat irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhoea (IBS-D) in adults. Shares of the company were trading flat at Rs 347 apiece on the BSE. *—PTI*

I-T dept conducts raid at Go Fashion premises

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Income-Tax Department has launched an extensive search operation at the premises of Go Fashion (India) Ltd, the parent company of the popular women's wear brand 'Go Colors'. The company confirmed in a regulatory filing that the operation commenced on 7 October, 2025 and covers its corporate offices, central warehouses, and retail outlets across multiple locations. Go Fashion stated that the exact nature of the alleged violations and their potential financial implications cannot be determined at this stage. The company emphasised that its daily operations remain unaffected, assuring customers and investors that all business activities are continuing as normal. The latest search comes amid heightened scrutiny of major consumer brands by tax authorities in recent months. *—PTI*

World Bank ups India's FY25-26 growth forecast to 6.5%

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The World Bank on Tuesday raised India's growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.5 per cent from 6.3 per cent estimated earlier, and said the country is expected to remain fastest-growing major economy, underpinned by continued strength in consumption growth.

The World Bank also cautioned that 50 per cent tariffs on Indian shipments imposed by the US will have implications on the country in the coming year.

It lowered the GDP growth forecast for 2026-27 from 6.7 per cent to 6.5 per cent. For fiscal 2027-28, the World Bank has projected a growth of 6.3 per cent.

"India is expected to remain the world's fastest-growing major economy, underpinned by continued strength in consumption growth," said World Bank's South Asia Development Update (October 2025).

- It lowered the GDP growth forecast for 2026-27 from 6.7 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

Domestic conditions, particularly agricultural output and rural wage growth, have been better than expected. The government's reforms to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) — reducing the number of tax brackets and simplifying compliance — are expected to support activity.

"The forecast for FY26/27 has been downgraded...as a result of the imposition of a 50 per cent tariff on about three-quarters of India's goods exports to the United States," it said.

The report further said growth in South Asia is expected to slow sharply from 6.6 per cent in 2025 to 5.8 per cent in 2026.

Despite this deceleration, growth will remain stronger than in other emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) regions.

Inflation is expected to continue within or trend toward the central bank targets, it said. *—PTI*

WeWork IPO closes with 1.15 times subscription

LG's three-day IPO got subscription of 1.04 times

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The initial public offer (IPO) of co-working space operator WeWork India Management Ltd sailed through on the last day of the share sale on Tuesday, getting 1.15 times subscription, led by institutional buyers.

The Rs 3,000 crore IPO received bids for 2,92,68,328 shares against 2,54,89,748 shares on offer, according to NSE data.

Qualified Institutional Buyers' (QIBs) category fetched 1.79 times subscription, while the quota for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) received 61 per cent subscription. The portion for non-institutional investors got 23 per cent subscription.

WeWork India has collected a little over Rs 1,348 crore from anchor investors.

The company's issue has a price band of Rs 615-648 per share, valuing the company at around Rs 8,685 crore at the upper end.

WeWork India has collected a little over Rs 1,348 crore from anchor investors *PHOTO: WeWork*

Since the issue is an OFS, WeWork India will not receive any proceeds from the issue, and the funds will go entirely to selling shareholders.

Additionally, the IPO of LG Electronics India Ltd, the Indian arm of South Korea's conglomerate LG, was fully subscribed on the first day of bidding on Tuesday.

The three-day IPO received bids for 7,44,73,685 shares against 7,13,34,320 shares on offer, translating into 1.04 times subscription, according to NSE data.

The portion meant for non-institutional investors garnered 2.31 times subscription, while the category for retail individual investors (RIIs) subscribed 81 per cent. The quota for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) received 49 per cent subscription.

LG Electronics India Ltd on Monday collected Rs 3,475 crore from anchor investors.

The Rs 11,607 crore IPO will conclude on 9 October. The price band has been fixed at Rs 1,080 to Rs 1,140 per share.

Meanwhile, the IPO of non-banking financial company Tata Capital Ltd has been subscribed to 75 per cent on the second day of the share sale on Tuesday.

The company's Rs 15,512 crore public offering will conclude on 8 October. The price range is Rs 310-326 per share. *—PTI*

8.9% IN 2025

Salaries in India may rise 9% in 2026

MUMBAI, 7 0CT

Salaries in India are likely to rise by 9 per cent next year, on the back of resilient consumption, investment and policy support despite global economic growth uncertainties, a survey said on Tuesday.

The 9 per cent projection for 2026 marks a slight increase from the actual 8.9 per cent salary growth observed in 2025, even as global economic growth slows, according to global professional services firm AON's 'Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2024-25 India.

Despite headwinds, India's economy remained resilient, supported by strong domestic consumption, investments and policy measures, it noted.

The 30th edition of AON's 'Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2024-25 India is based on inputs from 1,060 organisations across 45 industries. Further, its survey stated that salary increases are projected to vary across industries, with real estate/infrastructure (10.9 per cent) and non-banking financial companies (10 per cent) seeing the highest increases in 2026.

The automotive or vehicle manufacturing is expected to witness 9.6 per cent salary growth, followed by engineering design services, retail and life sciences, reflecting continued investment in critical talent pools. Further, the survey revealed that overall attrition rates have declined to 17.1 per cent in 2025, down from 17.7 per cent in 2024 and 18.7 per cent in 2023.

As the workforce becomes more settled, companies are well-positioned to invest in targeted upskilling and development programmes, ensuring they can build a resilient talent pipeline and prepare for future business needs, the survey said. *—PTI*

Markets advance for four straight days

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty advanced for the fourth consecutive day on Tuesday, helped by a rally in blue-chip bank stocks and buying by domestic institutional investors.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 136.63 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 81,926.75 after a see-saw trade. After a flat start, the index jumped 519.44 points or 0.63 per cent to hit a high of 82,309.56. However, profit-taking at higher levels dragged the barometer from the day's high levels.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 30.65 points or 0.12 per cent to 25,108.30 in a volatile trade.

Among Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel and ICICI Bank were among the major gainers.

However, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, Trent and Infosys were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.45 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.15 per cent.

- Sensex rose by 136.63 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 81,926.75, while Nifty climbed 30.65 points or 0.12 per cent to 25,108.30

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled in positive territory. Markets in China, South Korea were closed for a holiday.

Equity markets in Europe were trading on a mixed note. US markets ended mostly higher.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.15 per cent to USD 65.37 a barrel. *—PTI*

Gold jumps by Rs 700, hits fresh peak of Rs 1.2 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

Gold price jumped Rs 700 to hit a record high of Rs 1,24,000 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday as investors weighed the risk of an ongoing US government shutdown and growing bets of additional rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,23,300 per 10g on Monday.

In the local bullion market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 700 to hit a lifetime peak of Rs 1,23,400 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Tuesday. It had settled at Rs 1,22,700 per 10g in the previous market session.

However, silver retreated from its all-time high level, and plunged Rs 3,400 to Rs 1,54,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had ended at Rs 1,57,400 per kg on Monday.

On the global front, spot gold was trading lower at USD 3,958.18 per ounce. The yellow metal had hit an all-time high of USD 3,977.45 per ounce on Tuesday.

"Gold prices rose on Tuesday, with spot gold approaching the important milestone of USD 4,000 per ounce. *—PTI*

GeM surpasses ₹15.6L cr; CEO hails MSME

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has achieved a significant milestone, surpassing Rs 15.6 lakh crore in cumulative Gross Merchandise Value, highlighting its rapid growth and the rising involvement of MSMEs and public sector bodies in India's digital procurement landscape.

Speaking to ANI at the 11th FICCI-CMSME Summit, CEO Mihir Kumar stated, "We are very happy... we are close to touching 45 per cent against a target of 25 per cent for GMV from government departments." He said GeM's focus on MSMEs, revealing plans for a purchase order financing model to help them access credit earlier in the procurement cycle.

Kumar emphasised enhancing the digital experience on the GeM portal and making MSMEs future-ready as key priorities, aligned with Prime Minister's Atma Nirbharta initiative. *—ANI*

Goyal launches UPI in Qatar's Lulu mall

NEW DELHI, 7 OCT

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has officially been launched in Qatar, with Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal unveiling the system at Lulu Hypermarket in Doha. The initiative aims to promote seamless, low-cost transactions and deepen financial connectivity between India and Qatar as part of India's global digital payments expansion.

Calling the launch a "game-changer for digital connectivity and ease of payments," Goyal said the move will enhance trade, tourism, and trust between the two nations. UPI services are now operational across Qatar National Bank's (QNB) point-of-sale (POS) terminals, covering much of the Qatari market.

Developed in collaboration with NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), QNB, and payments gateway NETSTARS, the rollout enables faster, more efficient money transfers. He noted that UPI integration represents more than technological progress, it embodies India's digital transformation and international leadership in fintech. Qatar becomes the eighth country to accept UPI, which now handles nearly half of global digital payments. *—ANI*

RBI announces auction of Rs 28,000 cr govt securities

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced an auction of two Government of India (GoI) securities, totalling Rs 28,000 crore. This auction will feature the re-issue of 6.68 per cent GS 2040 worth Rs 16,000 crore and 6.90 per cent GS 2065 amounting to Rs 12,000 crore. The auction is scheduled for Friday, 10 October, with settlement on Monday, 13 October.

According to the RBI notification, the Government may accept additional subscriptions up to Rs 2,000 crore for each security. The auction will be conducted through the RBI's Mumbai office via its Core Banking Solution, e-Kuber system.

- According to the RBI notification, the Government may accept additional subscriptions up to Rs 2,000 crore for each security.

"Non-competitive bids will be accepted between 10.30am and 11.00am. on 10 October, while competitive bids will be received from 10.30am. to 11.30am.," the RBI stated. Results will be announced on the same day, with successful bidders required to make payments by 13 October.

The securities will be eligible for "When Issued" trading from 7 to 10 October. Individual investors may place bids through the Retail Direct portal. *—ANI*

AFTER US SC'S REFUSAL

Google to make changes to Play Store

WASHINGTON, 7 OCT

The US Supreme Court on Monday refused to protect Google from a year-old order requiring a major makeover of its Android app store that's designed to unleash more competition against a system that a jury declared an illegal monopoly.

The rebuff delivered in a one-sentence decision by the Supreme Court means Google will soon have to start an overhaul of its Play Store for the apps running on the Android software that powers most smartphones that compete against Apple's iPhone in US.

Among other changes, US District Judge James Donato last October ordered Google to give its competitors access to its entire inventory of Android apps and also make those alternative options available to download from the Play Store.

In a filing last month, Google told the US Supreme Court that Donato's order would expose the Play Store's more than 100 million US users to "enormous security and safety risks by enabling stores that stock malicious, deceptive, or pirated content to proliferate."

Google also said it faced a 22 October deadline to begin complying with the judge's order if the Supreme Court didn't grant its request for a stay. The Mountain View, California, company was seeking the protection while pursuing a last-ditch attempt to overturn the December 2023 jury verdict that condemned the Play Store as an abusive monopoly.

In a statement, Google said it will continue its fight in the Supreme Court while submitting to what it believes is a problematic order.

Although the Play Store changes will likely dent Google's profit, the firm makes most of its money from a digital ad network that's anchored by its dominant search engine — pillars of an internet empire that has been under attack on other legal fronts. *—PTI*

FM unveils foreign currency system at GIFT City

MUMBAI, 7 OCT

Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched a foreign currency settlement system at GIFT City on 7 October 2025, aiming to facilitate seamless, real-time transactions and enhance liquidity management. Presenting at the Global Fintech Fest 2025, Sitharaman noted that currently, foreign currency transactions typically face a settlement lag of 36 to 48 hours. The new system positions GIFT City alongside global financial centres like Hong Kong and Tokyo.

Sitharaman remarked that fintech has "democratised finance in India," stating that the nation ranks third in fintech companies and executes half of the world's real-time digital transactions. She underscored the government's enabling role in fostering innovation: "We like to remain on the fringes and help... we have to enable businesses and not interrupt their progress."

Addressing the role of artificial intelligence, she cautioned against "weaponising technology," highlighting both its transformative potential and darker aspects, including the use of deepfake videos. Lastly, she noted significant savings, amounting to Rs 4.31 lakh crore, through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Indian finishes fourth in Spanish Superbike debut

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA, 7 OCT

Chennai's 19-year-old Kavin Samaar Quintal impressed at the Copa de España de Velocidad Superbike, securing fourth place in the first race and seventh in the second. Racing as a wildcard with support from Teruel-based Gaman Racing Global Service, Kavin rode a BMW M1000RR against a strong field including Ducati, BMW, Honda, Suzuki, and Kawasaki machines. He qualified fourth out of 29 riders and fought through a challenging race, finishing with a time of 14:20.782 despite a fall. Spain's Daniel Saez claimed victory aboard Yamaha. Born 11 May, 2005, Kavin currently races in the Asia Road Racing Championship (AP250 class) with Honda Racing India. "Competing in Spain has been a dream come true," he said. *—PTI*

FIFA fines Malaysia over player eligibility dispute

KUALA LUMPUR, 7 OCT

The Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said it will appeal after FIFA suspended seven overseas-born players for 12 months and fined FAM $438,000 over falsified documentation. The players, who featured in Malaysia's 4-0 win over Vietnam in June's 2027 Asian Cup qualifier, were alleged to have claimed Malaysian heritage via grandparents. FIFA's report found the grandparents were born in Argentina, Brazil, the Netherlands, and Spain, calling the conduct "a form of cheating" that undermines football's integrity. FAM denied wrongdoing, attributing the issue to administrative errors, and plans to appeal using certified government documents. The case has sparked anger in Malaysia, with fans concerned over the country's image. *—PTI*

Ajaya ends 16th at Weightlifting Championships

FORDE, 7 OCT

Commonwealth champion Ajaya Babu Valluri finished 16th in the men's 79kg category at the World Weightlifting Championships on Monday, lifting 323kg (146kg snatch + 177kg clean and jerk), 12kg below his Commonwealth gold-winning total of 335kg in Ahmedabad. Indonesia's Rizki Juniansyah set a clean and jerk world record of 204kg, totalling 361kg to win gold, while North Korea's Ri Chong-song and Egypt's Mohamed Younes shared silver and bronze with 360kg. India's Ajith Narayana (men's 71kg) and Seram Nirupama Devi (women's 63kg) finished ninth. Indians failed to match their Commonwealth success at the Worlds. *—PTI*

Services boxers reign supreme at inaugural BFI Cup

CHENNAI, 7 OCT

Services boxers dominated the inaugural BFI Cup, claiming seven gold medals to top the standings. Asian U-22 champion S Vishwanath led the charge with a 5-0 win over Ashish (Haryana), followed by victories for Husamuddin, Ashish, Vanshaj, Sachin, Ankush, and Naveen Boora. Sumit Kumar (SAI), Daksh (SAI), and Sawan Gill (Chandigarh) were among the few non-Services winners. Haryana and Railways finished second and third respectively. In individual honours, Maharashtra's Khushi Jadhav was named the best woman boxer, while Services' Ashish took the men's title. Parthavi Grehwal (Rajasthan) and Lakshya Rathi (SAI) were recognised as best challengers, with Resika G (Tamil Nadu) and Lukas (Tamil Nadu) named most promising boxers. *—PTI*

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Vizag pitch set to aid struggling India

This marks the stadium's return to hosting women's ODIs after 11 years

VISAKHAPATNAM, 7 OCT

A balanced pitch at Visakhapatnam's ACA-VDCA Stadium is expected to favour batters, a welcome change for the Indian women's cricket team ahead of their crucial ICC Women's World Cup clashes against South Africa on 9 October and defending champions Australia on 12 October.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side has struggled with the bat in recent matches, managing 269/8 against Sri Lanka in Guwahati and 247 against Pakistan in Colombo. The return to a more batter-friendly surface could provide the momentum they need.

An Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) official told PTI, "The pitch will offer good help to batters. Spinners may find some assistance later in the game if there's no dew. Matches here, including IPL ties, have seen high scores."

Indeed, T20Is at the venue have witnessed multiple 200-plus chases. In men's ODIs, India's 387/5 against the West Indies in 2019 is the highest score, with four totals above 320 and six between 280 and 299. This marks the stadium's return to hosting women's ODIs after 11 years, the last being India vs Sri Lanka in 2014.

- An Andhra Cricket Association official said, "The pitch will offer good help to batters. Spinners may find some assistance later in the game if there's no dew."

T20Is at the Vizag venue have witnessed multiple 200-plus chases **PHOTO: PTI**

MITHALI, KALPANA HONOURED WITH STANDS

On 12 October, ahead of the Australia clash, stands at the stadium will be named after Indian cricket icons Mithali Raj and Ravi Kalpana. The move follows a suggestion by India opener Smriti Mandhana during the "Breaking the Boundaries" fireside chat with Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh in August. "The ACA's tribute reflects a deep commitment to honouring trailblazers who've redefined women's cricket in India," the ACA said.

Mithali retired in 2022 with 7,805 runs in 232 ODIs, 2,364 runs in 89 T20Is, and 699 runs in 12 Tests. Kalpana, who played seven ODIs, has inspired cricketers like Arundhati Reddy and S Meghana from Andhra Pradesh. *—PTI*

DOMINANT AUSTRALIA FAVOURITES AGAINST UNSETTLED PAKISTAN

COLOMBO, 7 OCT

Defending champions Australia are clear favourites ahead of their ICC Women's World Cup clash against an unsettled Pakistan side in Colombo on Wednesday.

Australia, led by Alyssa Healy, are the only team to post a 300-plus total in the tournament so far, underlining their intent to lift a record-extending eighth title. Their dominant 89-run win over New Zealand showcased their batting depth and bowling variety. Ashleigh Gardner's century in that game highlighted the team's resilience, even as key players like Healy, Beth Mooney, and Annabel Sutherland have yet to peak. Sutherland's pace and Sophie Molineux's spin have been key assets on slow subcontinental pitches.

In contrast, Pakistan sit bottom of the table after heavy defeats to Bangladesh (by 7 wickets) and India (by 88 runs). Their top-order, including Sidra Amin and Muneeba Ali, has struggled, and their bowling, led by Fatima Sana and Diana Baig, has lacked consistency.

Despite having played both matches at the Premadasa Stadium, Pakistan's local familiarity is unlikely to threaten Australia's balance, experience, and form. *—PTI*

'ICC must end neatly arranged Indo-Pak clashes'

LONDON, 7 OCT

Former England captain Michael Atherton has called for an end to cricketing ties between India and Pakistan in ICC tournaments, alleging that fixtures between the two rivals are "neatly arranged" to serve economic interests rather than sporting merit.

In a scathing column in The Times, Atherton said the rivalry has become "a proxy for broader tensions and propaganda" and cited incidents at the recent Asia Cup, including India refusing to shake hands with Pakistani players and declining the winner's trophy from ACC chief Mohsin Naqvi.

Since 2013, India and Pakistan have faced off in every ICC event, three 50-over World Cups, five T20 World Cups, and three Champions Trophies. Atherton accused organisers of manipulating draws to ensure the fixture for viewership and advertising revenue.

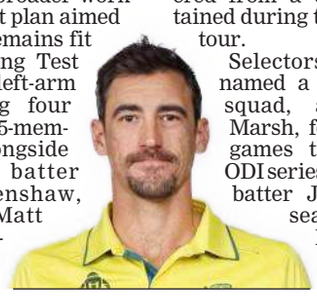
"The fixture carries huge economic clout, partly due to its rarity, which is key to the ICC's $3 billion broadcast deal for 2023–27," he wrote, adding that broadcasters rely on the match to gain financially. With no bilateral ties since the 2008 Mumbai attacks and India's recent blanket ban on bilateral sporting events with Pakistan, Atherton said the rivalry is being "exploited" and lacks justification. He urged the ICC to ensure transparency in future draws, stating, "If the teams don't meet every time, so be it." *—PTI*

Marsh to lead Aus against India, Starc returns

MELBOURNE, 7 OCT

Pace bowler Mitchell Starc has been recalled to Australia's ODI squad for the upcoming three-match home series against India, beginning in Perth on 19 October. Mitchell Marsh will continue to captain the side in the absence of regular skipper Pat Cummins, who is recovering from a back injury ahead of the Ashes series later this year.

Starc, who retired from T20 internationals last month, last featured in an ODI in November, 2024. His inclusion marks part of a broader workload management plan aimed at ensuring he remains fit for the demanding Test summer. The left-arm pacer is among four additions to the 15-member squad, alongside uncapped batter Matthew Renshaw, all-rounder Matt Short, and emerging fast bowler Mitch Owen.



Short returns from a side strain, while Owen has recovered from a concussion sustained during the South Africa tour.

Selectors have also named a 14-member T20 squad, again led by Marsh, for the first two games that follow the ODI series. Wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis and seamer Nathan Ellis make their comebacks, while Glenn Maxwell remains unavailable as he continues to recover from a fractured wrist sustained in New Zealand.

Wicketkeeper Alex Carey will miss the opening ODI in Perth to represent South Australia in the Sheffield Shield, with Inglis expected to take over keeping duties. Chair of Selectors George Bailey said the squads were designed to balance preparations for the home Test summer with maintaining continuity ahead of T20 World Cup. *—PTI*

PLAYERS OF THE MONTH

Kuldeep, Abhishek, Mandhana nominated for ICC honours

DUBAI, 7 OCT

Three Indian cricketers, Abhishek Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav, and Smriti Mandhana, have been nominated for the ICC Player of the Month awards for September, while Mandhana continues to lead the ICC Women's ODI batting rankings.

Abhishek Sharma's explosive form in India's Asia Cup-winning T20 campaign in the UAE earned him a nomination in the men's category. The 25-year-old left-hander scored 314 runs in seven T20Is at a phenomenal strike rate of 200, including three half-centuries, and achieved a record batting rating of 931, the highest ever recorded in men's T20I history. Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav also enjoyed an outstanding tournament, finishing as the leading wicket-taker with 17 wickets at an economy rate of 6.27. He starred with figures of 4/7 against the UAE and 4/30 in the final against Pakistan. Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett, who struck 497 runs in nine T20Is, joins them as the third nominee.

In the women's section, Smriti Mandhana earned her nomination after scoring 308 runs in four ODIs against Australia at an average of 77 and a strike rate of 135.68, including two centuries. She is joined by Pakistan's Sidra Amin and South Africa's Tazmin Brits.

Despite modest scores of 8 and 23 in the ICC Women's World Cup, Mandhana remains the world's top-ranked ODI batter with 791 points, ahead of England's Nat Sciver-Brunt. *—PTI*

INDIA LOSES TO JAPAN IN POLO AT ASIAN AQUATICS

AHMEDABAD, 7 OCT

India's water polo teams suffered heavy defeats in the preliminary rounds of the 11th Asian Aquatics Championships in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. The men's team lost 35-11 to Japan, ending hopes of Asian Games qualification, while the women's side fell 23-4 to Uzbekistan.

In the men's match, Japan's Lowrey Jun scored six goals, while India's Ankit Prasad managed four. For the women, Uzbekistan's Gavashelashvli Elena netted six goals, with India's Kripa Ranichithra and Prachetha Raghavendra Rao scoring two each.

Kazakhstan dominated artistic swimming, topping the medal table with ten medals, including six golds. Uzbekistan's Khadicha Agzamova and Sabina Makhmudova won gold in the duet free event. *—PTI*

In a 1st, Andhra woman cricketer gets a stand

VISAKHAPATNAM, 7 OCT

Ravi Kalpana, the first woman from Andhra Pradesh to represent India in cricket, is being honoured by the Andhra Cricket Association with a stand named after her, alongside former India captain Mithali Raj. Speaking emotionally, Kalpana said she "never expected this," adding that her parents felt the same pride as when she made her India debut a decade ago.

Although she played just seven ODIs in 2015, Kalpana is considered a trailblazer who inspired a generation of female cricketers in Andhra. Since her debut, several players, including Arundhati Reddy, S Meghana, Anusha Bareddy, and Sneha Deepti, have gone on to represent India, all crediting Kalpana as a role model and elder guide.

Kalpana, 29, mentors the Andhra senior and Under-23 women's teams and reflects on her early struggles, when a meagre Rs 4,000 ACA stipend barely covered basic kits. Kalpana said the stipend, though small, was crucial for players from middle-class families to pursue cricket seriously.

She highlighted the transformation in the state's cricketing landscape, noting improved facilities at schools, increased participation of girls, and a stronger presence of Andhra players in the national setup. "Earlier, there was only one Ravi Kalpana in the Indian team; now, five or six players represent the state, and young talents like Sharanya are emerging," she said.

The stand-naming ceremony symbolises the progress of women's cricket in Andhra and the enduring legacy of its pioneering players. *—PTI*

Atiqa Mir at the IAME UAE Karting Championship, in Dubai **PHOTO: PTI**

Indian racing prodigy Atiqa storms to top-10 finish in UAE

DUBAI, 7 OCT

Indian racing sensation Atiqa Mir demonstrated exceptional resilience and talent as she stormed through the field to claim a top-10 finish in the opening round of the IAME UAE Karting Championship.

Competing for the AKCEL GP Academy Team, the 10-year-old racer had a challenging weekend following a podium finish in the RMC Invitational the previous Sunday. The Formula 1 Academy-backed driver impressed early on, topping official practice and qualifying seventh out of 32 competitors in a fiercely competitive, male-dominated grid.

Atiqa carried her momentum into Heat 1, gaining three positions to finish fourth. However, in the pre-final, her charge was cut short after a crash while attempting an overtake for third place, leaving her with injuries to her hand and elbow and a damaged kart.

Starting from the back of the grid in the final, Atiqa showed remarkable determination, climbing from 28th to 10th, making her the highest mover in the race. "I was on pace and a win was possible but for the crash," said Atiqa. "I drove my heart out and had a great time overtaking 18 drivers." *—PTI*

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Rivalry reignited as Anand, Kasparov face off after 30 years

ST LOUIS, 7 OCT

- The highly anticipated contest features a 12-game Chess 960 match, played in rapid and blitz formats, now often called Freestyle Chess. The icons first faced each other in the 1995 Classical World Championship

The legendary rivalry between former world chess champions Viswanathan Anand and Garry Kasparov is set to be reignited after three decades as they face off in the Clutch Chess: The Legends tournament in St. Louis, USA, starting Wednesday.

The highly anticipated contest features a 12-game Chess 960 match, played in rapid and blitz formats, now often called Freestyle Chess. The two icons first faced each other in the 1995 Classical World Championship in New York, where Kasparov triumphed 10.5-7.5. Since retiring in 2004, Kasparov has focused on exhibitions and training programmes worldwide, while Anand, semi-retired, dedicates his time to mentoring young Indian talent through the Westbridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA), which has already produced a world champion in D Gukesh.

The three-day tournament carries a total prize pool of USD 144,000, with stakes increasing daily. Each day features four games, two rapid and two blitz. Wins on the second day count double, while victories on the final day are worth triple, adding tension and excitement to the match.

The winner will claim USD 70,000, while the runner-up receives USD 50,000. If the 12-game match ends in a tie, the prize money will be equally shared at USD 60,000 each. An additional USD 24,000 in bonus money is also available across the 12 games, providing further incentive for both legends to play aggressively.

Fans and chess enthusiasts around the world are eagerly anticipating this reunion, which promises to showcase strategic brilliance, nostalgia, and high-stakes competition between two of the greatest players in the history of chess. *—PTI*